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near Ta Li, was finished in the spring of 1938, some parts of it having been in partial use for two years before that date. It crosses five major passes and winds for long distances on the crests of the mountains, in a region absolutely uninhabited. The second section, from Hsia Kuan to the Burmese frontier at Nam Kan is slightly longer, about 290 miles, and passes through much more difficult country. The mountains on this section are both higher and steeper, and the two great rivers, the Mekong and Salween, had to be bridged anew, as the old mule bridges were not strong enough for wheeled traffic. Work was started in December, 1937, and the first through traffic passed over the road from Burma in December, 1938, an achievement which is barely credible to anyone familiar with the country. This section was also built by forced labour, the inhabitants of districts up to one hundred miles from the road being brought to work on it, where they camped in shelters made of boughs and turf. It is probable that not far short of one hundred thousand men and women were employed in this year building the road.

It does not seem likely that the existence of the motor road will, at least for many years, destroy the old caravan trade. The silk road finds an outlet at Bhamo, which is the most convenient port on the Irrawaddy, and therefore does not follow the line of the motor road for the last one hundred and fifty miles. The tea road from south Yunnan to Tibet is also unaffected by the motor road which crosses it at right angles at Hsia Kuan. Moreover, it is likely to be much cheaper to send goods by mule than by motor car ; the opening of the Hsia Kuan—K'un Ming section of the Burma road did not affect the transit of goods from K'un Ming by mule at all. Individual travellers, on the other hand, naturally preferred to travel by bus when possible, and do thirteen stages in three days. The passenger service, how-

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491 ever, remains irregular and slow. Days pass when there are
494 no buses running, and when they do run they are often delayed by breakdowns or by subsidence of the new-made road.

491 The construction of motor roads does not therefore have at first any profound effect on the lives of the Yunnanese country folk. Indeed, their only direct concern with these roads is in the building of them, which they have to do by forced labour. This duty is the more unwelcome as they themselves cannot use the road when it is finished. Mules are not allowed on the motor roads, because the passage of large caravans of mules not only destroys the surface of the road when it is newly laid, but also interferes with motor traffic. The Yunnanese mule or pack pony has naturally never seen a motor car, or even a wheeled cart, and in consequence they stampede in wild alarm as soon as one appears. The proportion of muleteers to animals is small, for the caravans on the old pack roads need very little control, and therefore when a caravan of fifty or more mules stampedes at the sound of an approaching car, the ten or twelve men in charge cannot quiet them, loads are thrown off, and the frightened animals career wildly down the road communicating their panic to any other beasts they meet.

The muleteers therefore would not use the motor roads, even if they were allowed to do so, and the existing transport system derives no benefit from the construction of these roads. Nor do the other wayfarers, *hua kan* bearers and porters make much use of the new route. A motor road in mountainous country has to wind about by long detours to climb the ranges, and it is in practice quicker for those on foot to cut across the hills by the old paths which are so much shorter, if also steeper. Porters and litter bearers, as has been mentioned above, like to stop for a rest and a drink

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of tea every few miles, and these teahouse resting places 491
are all on the old tracks, since the motor road winding about the hillsides passes through uninhabited forest country for many miles on end. The same difficulty occurs in regard to sleeping accommodation, for the foot passenger can at most do twenty-five miles in a day, and in some parts the motor road, making a long detour, does not touch any village for more than forty miles. For these reasons the foot passenger traffic can make no use of the new road either.

Where a public bus service exists it is only a small 494
number of wealthy people who can afford to use it. The fare to Hsia Kuan from K'un Ming was at first seventeen New Yunnan dollars, and then was raised to twenty-one. No poor man could afford this fare for a single journey, low though it is by European standards. A poor man, even a young student going up to K'un Ming to the Middle School, would find it much cheaper to walk the distance in thirteen days than to ride in the bus for three. By walking he would only have the small charges for food and lodging to pay, for he would take his scanty luggage on his back. The large numbers of men who go down to Burma for work in the winter months also always travel on foot, carrying their baggage on baskets and poles. For the poor man in Yunnan, Shanks' pony is and will long remain the only conveyance.

Unlike any other province in China, except neighbouring 505
Kwei Chou, Yunnan has no water communications of any importance. There are no navigable rivers in the province. Although it is crossed by four of the greatest rivers, the Yang Tze, West River, Mekong and Salween, not one of them can be navigated in Yunnan. Yet in spite of the isolation and distance from other navigable water, there is an active boat traffic on the great Yunnan Lakes, and on the most isolated of all, the Erh Hai at Ta Li, the boats are the biggest and best made of any in Yunnan. The Erh Hai